

Army and DOD units, activities, or components will appoint a commissioned, warrant, or noncommissioned officer or a qualified civilian employee to investigate a claims incident in the manner set forth in DA Pam 27-162 and this part. An ACO will direct such investigation to the extent deemed necessary.

(2) CPOs are responsible for investigating claims incidents arising out of the activities and operations of their command or agency. An ACO may assign area jurisdiction to a CPO after coordination with the appropriate commander to investigate claims incidents arising in the ACO's designated geographic area. (See § 536.3(f).)

(3) Claims incidents involving patients arising from treatment by a health care provider in an Army medical treatment facility (MTF), including providers defined in 536.23(b)(4)(ii), will be investigated by a claims judge advocate (CJA), medical claims judge advocate (MCJA), or claims attorney rather than by a unit claims officer.

(4) An ACO will publish and distribute a claims directive to all DOD and Army installations and activities including active, Army Reserve, and ARNG units as well as units located on the post at which the ACO is located. The directive will outline each installations' and activities' claims responsibilities. It will institute a serious claims incident reporting system.

(b) *Command claims service responsibility.* A command claims service is responsible for the investigation and processing of claims incidents arising in its geographic area of responsibility or for any incidents within the authority of any foreign claims commission (FCC) it appoints. This responsibility will be carried out by an ACO or a CPO to the extent possible. A command claims service will publish a claims directive outlining the geographic areas of claims investigative responsibilities of each of its installations and activities, requiring each ACO or CPO to report all serious claims incidents directly to the Commander USARCS.

(c) *USARCS responsibility.* USARCS exercises technical supervision over all claims offices, providing guidance on specific cases throughout the claims process, including the method of inves-

tigation. Where indicated, USARCS may investigate a claims incident that normally falls within a command claims services', an ACO's, or a CPO's jurisdiction. USARCS typically acts through an area action officer (AAO) who is assigned as the primary point of contact with command claims services, ACOs or CPOs within a given geographic area. In areas outside the United States and its commonwealths, territories and possessions, where there is no command claims service or ACO, USARCS is responsible for investigation and for appointment of FCCs.

NOTE TO § 536.24: See the parallel discussion at DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-3.

§ 536.25 Procedures for accepting claims.

All ACOs and CPOs will institute procedures to ensure that potential claimants or attorneys speak to a CJA, claims attorney, investigator, or examiner. On initial contact, claims personnel will render assistance, discuss all aspects of the potential claim, and determine what statutes or procedures apply. Assistance will be furnished to the extent set forth in DA Pam 27-162, paragraph 2-4. To advise claimants on the correct remedy, claims personnel will familiarize themselves with the remedies listed in DA Pam 27-162, paragraphs 2-15 and 2-17.

§ 536.26 Identification of a proper claim.

(a) A claim is a writing that contains a sum certain for each claimant and that is signed by each claimant, or by an authorized representative, who must furnish written authority to sign on a claimant's behalf. The writing must contain enough information to permit investigation. The writing must be received not later than two years from the date the claim accrues. A claim under the Foreign Claims Act (FCA) may be presented orally to either the United States or the government of the foreign country in which the incident occurred, within two years, provided that it is reduced to writing not later than three years from the date of accrual. A claim may be transmitted by facsimile or telegram. However, a copy of an original claim must be submitted as soon as possible.